

Tulips

Kazakhstan

Tour dates:
April 14-26, 2012
Group: 10 persons
Cost: \$3,175/ person
double occupancy

Tour highlights:
Kazakhstan, Stroll
through colorful fields
of spring flowers in the
birthplace of tulips.



Tour overview



Majestic land of tulips.
Tulipa greigi Regel



Tulipa greigi shocks visitors to Kazakhstan by the extraordinary variability of colors and patterns of the flower goblets.



Iridodictyum kolpakowskianum (Regel) Rodion.

The tulip has been cultivated by the Turks for over 3000 years. Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, the Ambassador of the Holy Roman Empire to Constantinople (Istanbul), had seen the beautiful flower called the tulip, after the Turkish word for turban, growing in the palace gardens. In 1554 he sent tulip bulbs and seeds to Vienna botanist Carolus Clusius. Clusius studied tulips and experimented with hybridization. In 1593 he moved to Leiden where he headed the recently founded Hortus Botanicus, the oldest botanical garden of Europe. Hence the plant was introduced in Western Europe and in the Netherlands. However, the wild tulips did not originate from Turkey but from Central Asia which still remains the center of the tulip biodiversity.

This spring stroll through an extraordinary display of colorful tulip fields in the mountains of Southern Kazakhstan. Red, orange or yellow goblets of the magnificent Greig's tulip (*Tulipa greigi* Regel) immediately grasp your attention. Graceful waterlily flowers of *Tulipa kaufmanniana* Regel decorate the lower slopes and bands of multi-colored *Tulipa ostrowskiana* Regel and *Tulipa kolpakowskiana* Regel shine in the crystal clear air of the Tien-Shan Mountains. You will see more than a dozen tulip

species flowering. Tulips of Southern Kazakhstan are truly one of the nature's miracles. Just a few years ago a new species of tulip was discovered in these mountains. It is estimated that up to 75% of the famous Dutch tulip varieties come from just two Central Asia species *Tulipa greigi* and *Tulipa kaufmanniana*.

In addition to tulips, that comprise only part of colorful spring in Kazakhstan, you will find blooming *Korolkowia sewerzowi* Regel and vibrant colors of *Rhinopetalum stenanthemum* Regel flowers. On the slopes, still partially covered by snow, you will admire the clearly visible star-shaped white flowers of *Crocus alatavicus* Regel & Semenow and the beautiful multi-color flowers of *Iridodictyum kolpakowskianum* (Regel) Rodion.

You may see dozens of Siberian Ibex (*Capra sibirica* Meyer). With some luck you should be able to watch brown bears (*Ursus arctos* L.) feeding on the fresh green growth near the snowline. You will never forget the sound of numerous flocks of Demoiselle Crane (*Anthropoides virgo* L.) passing over your head on their migration to North.

Arrival in Almaty. Kapchagai.

Arrival in Almaty. Meeting at the airport. Transfer to the hotel. Accomodation and overnight. Breakfast at the hotel. Transfer to the area of the Kapchagai reservoir (50 miles). Walks in the vicinity of a water reservoir. You will see a charming yellow form of *Tulipa alberti* Regel blooming among white blossomed *Spiraea hypericifolia* L. shrubs. The list of flowering plant species of this area includes *Tulipa alberti* Regel, *Gagea filiformis* Merckl. ex Herder, *Iris tenuifolia* Pall., *Tulipa buhseana* Boiss., *Tulipa behmiana* Regel, *Gagea ova* Stapf, *Gagea minutiflora* Regel, *Gagea tenera* Pasch. Back at Almaty and catch a 7.30 PM train to Tulkubas (385 miles). Dinner and overnight on the train.

Tulipa alberti Regel



Day 2, April 15



Zhabagly

Arrival at the Tulkubas train station at 7.30 AM. Meeting at the train station. Transfer to Zhabagly village (7 miles). Arrival in Zhabagly, accommodation in the guest house (B&B). Short rest. Breakfast.

Excursion in the vicinities of the reserve. Overnight at the guest house.

Day 3-8, April 16-21

Aksu-Zhabagly Nature Reserve

Breakfast at the guest house. Nature excursions in the Aksu-Zhabagly Nature Reserve. See colorful goblets of the magnificent Greig's tulip (*Tulipa greigi* Regel) and elegant water-lily flowers of *Tulipa kaufmanniana* Regel. Multi-colored *Tulipa ostrowskiana* Regel and *Tulipa kolpakowskiana* Regel adorn the slopes of the Tien-Shan Mountains. Tulips of Southern Kazakhstan are truly one of the nature's wonders. Just a few years ago a new species of tulip was discovered in this area. It is estimated that up to 75% of the famous Dutch tulip varieties come from just two Central Asia species *Tulipa greigi* and *Tulipa kaufmanniana*. Overnight at the guest house.



Tulipa greigi Regel



Allium karataviense Regel

**Kuyk Pass,
Merke Gorge.**



Tulipa zenaidae Vved.

Breakfast at the guest house. Transfer at 8.00 AM to Merke Gorge (175 miles). Stop on the way at Kuyk Pass and at other locations with blossoming plants. We shall see among other flowering plants *Eremurus hilariae* Vved. & alii, *Allium karataviense* Regel, *Tragopogon ruber* S.G.Gmel., *Glaucium elegans* Fisch. & C.A.Mey., *Tulipa zenaidae* Vved., *Tulipa ostrowskiana* Regel *Tulipa kolpakowskiana* Regel, *Tulipa binutans* Vved.. Picnic lunch on the way. After walking tour, transfer to “Ak-Niet” resort accommodation. Dinner and overnight at the resorts hotel.



Tulipa ostrowskiana Regel

Day 10, April 23

Korday Pass.

Breakfast at the hotel. Transfer at 8.00AM to Almaty through the settlement Shu (290 miles). Stop on the way at Kordayi Pass and at other locations with blooming plants (*Tulipa ostrowskiana* Regel, *Tulipa kolpakowskiana* Regel, *Leontice ewersmannii*

Bunge). Lunch on the way. Arrive in Almaty, transfer to the hotel, accommodation, overnight.

Day 11, April 24

**Syugaty Valley,
Ketmen Mountains,
Kegen Pass**



Tulipa greigi Regel

Breakfast at the hotel. Transfer: Almaty – Chilik village – Baiseit village – Aksy village - Ketmen Mountains - Kegen Pass (150 miles). Picnic lunch. The Ketmen Mountains area is well known for tremendous displays of *Tulipa iliensis* Regel as well as miniature *Primula algida* Janka ex Boiss and the intense blue hues of *Iris ruthenica* Ker Gawl.. *Tulipa tetraphylla* Regel inhabits the stony slopes. In addition to the quite common *Iris tianschanica* (Maxim.) Vved. we hope to see the oddly-coloured *Iris scariosa* Willd. ex Link. The flowering plant species of this area also include *Adonis chrysocyathus* Hook.f. & Thomson ex Hook.f., *Corydalis schanginii* (Pall.) B.Fedtsch., *Juno kuschakewiczii* (B.Fedtsch.) Poljak, *Tulipa buhseana* Boiss., *Tulipa tetraphylla* Regel. Back to Almaty. Dinner at the

hotel, overnight.



Tulipa buhseana Boiss.

Day 12, April 25

Kaskelen Gorge



Crocus alatavicus Regel & Semenow

Kaskelen Gorge, Zailiyskii Alatau range (Tien-Shan Mountains). Breakfast at the hotel. Transfer to Kaskelen Gorge (15 miles). Snow-capped high peaks of Kaskelen Mountains serve as a perfect background for an exceptional flowering flora, with abundant tulips complemented by the lovely *Iris alberti* Regel and *Primula kaufmanniana* Regel blooming amid a carpet of *Gagea* and *Corydalis* species. The list of flowering plant species of this

area includes *Tulipa dasystemon* Regel, *Primula algida* Janka ex Boiss., *Corydalis glaucescens* Regel and abundant *Gagea emarginata* Kar. & Kir. The species flowering at this time also include *Tulipa ostrowskiana* Regel, *Tulipa dasystemon* Regel, *Crocus alatavicus* Regel & Semenow, *Euphorbia yaroslavii* Poljakov. Picnic lunch. Return to Almaty. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Day 13, April 26

Almaty

Transfer to the airport. Departure from Almaty

Things to Know Before You Go

Gateway City Airport

Almaty International Airport (ALA) is the largest international airport in Kazakhstan. It is located just 11 miles from the centre of the City and serves a variety of international flights. The airport is one of the major Central Asia hubs.

Weather

During your trip the weather in Southern Kazakhstan can be very changeable, cold and a snow in mountains is possible. But as a rule at this time warm, sunny and not too hot weather. The average April temperature in Almaty is 11°C (52°F) with a minimum average at 5°C (41°F) and a maximum average 16°C (61°F).

Documents

Citizens of most non-CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries must obtain a visa prior to arriving in Kazakhstan.

Money

The national currency in Kazakhstan is Tenge (KZT). The exchange rate in December 2011 was about 148 KZT per dollar (USD).

Physical Activities

For the most part walks are easy. The exploration of tulips in the Southern Kazakhstan may involve some amount of physical activity, including hiking a few miles over rugged terrain. You should be sure that you are in good health and able to participate in these activities to fully enjoy your Kazakhstan experience.

Clothing

We recommend that you keep the weight and bulk down to a minimum as the baggage allowance is 20 kg on most flights. Since you will be spending much of the time outdoors bring comfortable hiking apparel and shoes. Good quality rain pants and a hooded jacket that will cover your warmer underlayers are essential. You will not need much clothing for cities.

Equipment

It is prudent to have a rucksack especially for day trips. You will also want to be sure to bring a camera and binoculars for observing wildlife.

Electrical Items

Electricity throughout Kazakhstan is 220 volt/50 Hz. Be sure to check your electric equipment for 220 volt/50 Hz compatibility and to bring your own converter if required.



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that invests all proceeds in conservation and biodiversity research which directly benefits natural habitats and human health in the host countries.

You as a traveler directly contribute to preserving our planet's environment, improving human health, and supporting environmentally sustainable communities.



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